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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work

Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[1] the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[2] the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3] the Declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women,[4] the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[5] as well as all relevant General Assembly resolutions and outcomes of United Nations

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
[2] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.
[3] General Assembly resolution 55/2.
[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 27* and corrigendum (E/2005/27 and Corr.1), chap. I.A.
[5] General Assembly resolution 60/1.

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conferences, and reiterates that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, peace and security, and emphasizes the need to ensure the full integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process and its commitment to strengthening and safeguarding a national and international enabling environment, inter alia, through promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms, mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes and promoting the full participation and empowerment of women and enhanced international cooperation;

2. *Reaffirms also* that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is of fundamental importance in sustainable development, achieving sustained economic growth, eradicating poverty and hunger and in combating diseases, and that investing in the development of women and girls has a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth, in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services;

3. *Recalls* that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stresses that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields;

4. *Recognizes* that all forms of violence against women and girls violates the enjoyment of their human rights and constitutes a major impediment to the ability of women and girls to make use of their capabilities, limiting their participation and agency in development, including in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Recognizes also* that the creation of an enabling environment at all levels is necessary to enhance women's participation in and benefit from development processes and that challenges to the creation of an enabling environment include:

(a) Insufficient coherence and coordination between development policies and gender equality policies and strategies;

(b) Insufficient time-bound targets for implementation of gender equality policies and strategies;

(c) Underrepresentation of women in decision-making;

(d) Insufficient promotion and protection of the full enjoyment by women of all human rights;

(e) Persistent violence and multiple forms of discriminatory practices and attitudes against women;

(f) Insufficient recognition of the contributions of women to the economy and to all areas of public life;

(g) Unequal access to education and training, health care and decent work;

(h) Unequal access to opportunities and unequal access to and control over resources, such as land, credit, capital, economic assets and information and communication technologies;

(i) Insufficient political will and resources;

(j) Inadequate implementation of gender mainstreaming;

(k) Insufficient national mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability;

(l) Impact on women of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases;

(m) Armed conflicts, lack of security and natural disasters;

(n) Slow and uneven implementation of commitments to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(o) Persistence of difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, which has resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty;

(p) Insufficient international cooperation in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women in the context of poverty eradication and health, bearing in mind financing for development;

(q) Prevailing harmful cultural and traditional practices;

(r) Insufficient information and sex-disaggregated data and statistics;

(s) Insufficient progress in the promulgation of gender-responsive laws;

6. *Underlines* that addressing such challenges at all levels requires a systematic, comprehensive, integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach, with policy, legislative and programmatic interventions;

7. *Urges* Governments and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, including the international financial institutions, national parliaments, political parties, civil society, including the private sector, trade unions, academia, the media and non-governmental organizations and other actors, to take the following actions:

(a) Incorporate gender perspectives into all local and national planning, budgetary, monitoring and evaluation and reporting processes and mechanisms relating to national development strategies, including strategies focused on the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, fully utilizing existing gender equality policies and strategies;

(b) Elaborate and implement comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues;

(c) Develop and implement effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at all levels to evaluate progress towards gender equality, including through the collection, compilation and analysis and use of age- and sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, and continue developing and using appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators;

(d) Encourage and promote close cooperation between central authorities and local governments to develop programmes aimed at the achievement of gender equality, thereby granting equal opportunities for women and girls;

(e) Elaborate and implement strategies and policies, including targeted measures in support of their obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, provide protection to victims and investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of such violence and recognize that violence against women and girls is a serious obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace and has a negative impact on the social and economic development of communities and States;

(f) Continue efforts towards full and effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003 on prevention of armed conflict and its agreed conclusions on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding;[6]

(g) Continue efforts towards the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women and peace and security, recognizing the linkages between gender equality, peace, security and development;

(h) Take the necessary measures to ensure that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through inheritance;

(i) Take all appropriate measures to enable women to participate fully in decision-making at all levels in all aspects of their daily lives;

(j) Incorporate gender perspectives in all policies and programmes on international migration, promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women migrants and combat discrimination, exploitation, ill-treatment, unsafe working conditions, violence, including sexual violence and trafficking, and facilitate family reunification in an expeditious and effective manner with due regard to applicable laws as such reunification has a positive effect on the integration of migrants;

(k) Eliminate all forms of discrimination, sexual exploitation and violence against female refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons and promote their active involvement in decisions affecting their lives and communities, while recalling the relevant norms of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law;

(l) Increase understanding of and capacity to implement gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, including by requiring the use of gender analysis as the basis for all policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in particular in the areas of health, education and employment;

(m) Develop and promote strategies to mainstream a gender perspective into design and implementation of development and socio-economic policies and in budgetary processes and share best practices and encourage innovations in gender mainstreaming approaches;

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[6] Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/12.

(n) Mobilize adequate funding for gender-sensitive development policies and programmes and for national mechanisms for gender equality, through national, regional and international resource mobilization and gender-responsive budget processes in all sector areas and allocate adequate funding for women-specific measures;

(o) Support women's organizations that strive to empower women and girls and improve their living conditions;

(p) Encourage enhanced coordination and collaboration between all mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality at all levels, such as women's ministries, gender equality commissions, relevant parliamentary committees, ombudspersons and gender focal points and working groups in line ministries, as well as with women's groups, associations and networks;

(q) Take effective measures to eliminate discrimination, gender stereotypes and harmful traditional, cultural and customary practices;

(r) Develop and implement strategies to increase the involvement of men and boys in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through, inter alia, the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the sharing of household work and family care and the promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance, and encourage men and women to foster responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and attitudinal changes to promote the realization of gender equality;

(s) Increase women's and girls' equal and effective access to and use of information and communication technologies as well as applied technology, including through the transfer of knowledge and technology on concessional, preferential and favourable terms to developing countries, as mutually agreed, training and infrastructure provision, involvement in the planning, development and production of content and participation in management, governance and decision-making positions in regulatory or policymaking bodies for information and communication technologies;

(t) Invest in appropriate infrastructure and other projects and create opportunities for economic empowerment in order to alleviate the burden of time-consuming everyday tasks on women and girls allowing them, inter alia, to engage in income-generating activities and attend school;

(u) Give special attention to incorporating principles of advancing equalization of opportunities in programmes, methods and processes to empower and support women and girls with disabilities;

(v) Call upon the international community to make efforts to mitigate the effects of excess volatility and economic disruption, which have a disproportionately negative impact on women, and to enhance trade opportunities for developing countries in order to improve the economic situation of women;

(w) Call upon States parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto and to take into consideration the concluding comments as well as the general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, call upon other States parties to the Convention that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to

the Optional Protocol thereto and to reinforce, in efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the linkages with the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[7] and the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action;

8. *Underlines* the fact that each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized and that concerted and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development;

9. *Urges* Governments to ensure that women, especially poor women in developing countries, benefit from the pursuit of effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, including the option of official development assistance and debt cancellation, and calls for continued international cooperation;

10. *Encourages* the international community, the United Nations system, the relevant regional and international organizations and the private sector and civil society to:

(a) Assist Governments, at their request, in building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

(b) Provide the necessary financial resources to assist national Governments in their efforts to meet the development targets and benchmarks agreed upon at the major United Nations summits and conferences and their follow-up processes, including the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the twenty-third and twenty-fourth special sessions of the General Assembly;

(c) Give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies and integrating gender concerns into national programmes, including by providing adequate resources to operational activities for development in support of the efforts of Governments to ensure full and equal access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology, as well as full and equal participation in all decision-making;

11. *Urges* multilateral donors, and invites international financial institutions, within their respective mandates, and regional development banks to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular in rural and remote areas;

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[7] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

12. *Underlines* the importance of incorporating a gender, human rights and socio-economic perspective in all policies relevant to education, health and work and to creating an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, and calls upon Governments to:

(a) Ensure women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of quality education and training, while ensuring progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities that primary education is compulsory, accessible and available free to all;

(b) Incorporate gender perspectives and human rights in health sector policies and programmes, pay attention to women's specific needs and priorities, ensure women's right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and their access to affordable and adequate health-care services, including sexual and reproductive and maternal health care and life-saving obstetric care in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and recognize that the lack of economic empowerment and independence increases women's vulnerability to a range of negative consequences, involving the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other poverty related diseases;

(c) Take all appropriate measures to respond to the concern that the HIV/AIDS pandemic reinforces gender inequalities, that women and girls bear a disproportionate share of the burden imposed by the HIV/AIDS crisis, that they are more easily infected, that they play a key role in care and that they have become more vulnerable to poverty as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis;

(d) Promote respect and realization of the principles contained in the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up,[8] consider ratification and full implementation of International Labour Organization Conventions, design policies and programmes that are particularly relevant to providing equal access for women to productive employment and decent work, remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, promote the recognition of the value of women's unremunerated work and to develop and promote policies that facilitate the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities and access to work for women with disabilities.

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[8] Adopted on 18 June 1998 by the International Labour Conference at its eighty-sixth session.